

SUMMARY OF THE PROFICIENCY TESTING COMMITTEE MEETING AUGUST 24, 1999

The Proficiency Testing (PT) Committee of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) met by teleconference on Tuesday, August 24, 1999, at 1 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT). The meeting was led by its chair, Ms. Barbara Burmeister of the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene. A list of action items is given in Attachment A. A list of participants is given in Attachment B. *The main purpose of the meeting was to discuss nomination of a replacement member, discuss an interpretive guidance document for Section 2.0, and decide whether a face-to-face meeting is needed prior to NELAC Vi.*

INTRODUCTION

The minutes of the August 3, 1999 teleconference were approved. The status of the Action Items are as follows:

- Mr. Matt Caruso has developed a definition for “assigned value.” Ms. Burmeister will distribute this to the committee for review before submitting it as an addition to the NELAC glossary.
- Mr. Larry Jackson has been unable to determine whether the NELAC PT Committee can gain access to the Contract Laboratory Program (CLP) database. He will continue to try to find a contact at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) to answer this question.
- The Solid Waste Subcommittee has not yet met to develop timelines for the development of regression equations for analytes outside the scope of water pollution (WP) and for solid waste analytes.
- Ms. Barbara Burmeister will wait until the interpretive guidelines are finalized before updating the PT Committee’s Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs). These guidelines will be discussed in today’s meeting.

REPLACEMENT MEMBER

Ms. Darlene Raiford from the Hampton Roads Sanitation District, Central Environmental Lab, has resigned her membership on the PT Committee due to change in job position. Therefore, the committee is seeking a replacement to fill her position as a contributor (i.e., non-state member) on the committee. Possible candidates were identified by the “NELAC-Needs-You Responders,” however, this list provided only minimal information about each person. The committee felt that they needed more information about the candidates to make a decision. Ms. Burmeister has agreed to contact each of the candidates and ask them to fill out nomination forms.

NELAC V EVALUATION

A summary of evaluations received from NELAC V was compiled and distributed to committee chairs by Ms. Betsy Dutrow. Comments were received about the general conference as well as on

the conduct of the committee sessions. This summary was distributed to the PT Committee by Ms. Burmeister for review and consideration.

COMMENTS FROM CALIFORNIA AND ILLINOIS (REQUEST FOR INTERPRETIVE GUIDANCE)

Comments were received from California and Illinois regarding interpretation of Section 2.0. Mr. Matt Caruso will be asked to draft a response to these comments.

An interpretive guidance document, drafted by Ms. Anne Rhyne, was distributed to the committee for discussion. Ms. Rhyne summarized the document for the committee and explained that it applies only to the specific case described in Section 2.0, where the NELAP Accrediting Authority (AA) may decide to accept PT results from a non-accredited PT Provider for fields of testing for which PT samples are not available either through a NELAP PTOB/PTPA (i.e., NIST) or an ANSI/RAB-accredited registrar or equivalent. Examples of these fields of testing are: solid waste analytes and non-water supply/water pollution (WS/WP) analytes. Ms. Rhyne further explained that some of the NELAP AAs did not want to blindly accept the decision of the primary NELAP AA. They had requested documentation that the provider meets the criteria specified in the NELAC standards. Section 2.0, as written, does not require any documentation.

A discussion ensued on the process being guidance vs. standards, the capability of every state to assess PT providers, reciprocity and documentation. Ms. Rhyne will revise the interpretive guidelines, stressing that documentation be maintained, and send the revision to the committee for review.

AGENDA FOR NELAC VI

Ms. Burmeister shared a suggestion that she received from Mr. Tom Coyner, before leaving his position on the committee. Rather than going through the chapter section by section, he suggested that they review the material in larger groups, as other committees have done. Ms. Burmeister asked committee members to consider adopting this new approach for NELAC Vi.

FACE-TO-FACE COMMITTEE MEETING

Ms. Burmeister asked committee members whether they need to have a face-to-face meeting before NELAC Vi. Proposed changes to the standard are due November 5, 1999. Comments have been received so far from Mr. George Avery (Arkansas Dept. of Health), Mr. Bob Rucinski (RT Corporation), Ms. Michelle Kropilak (New Jersey DEP), Mr. Ted Belsky (California ELAP), and Ms. Jeri Long (Illinois ELAP). Ms. Rhyne pointed out that, often, comments are not submitted until close to the deadline. No one was aware of a due date for comments, so Ms. Rhyne said that she will ask about it at the next Board of Directors' meeting. Committee members agreed that a face-to-face meeting was probably necessary. Ms. Burmeister then asked committee members to send their schedules for the last two weeks in October to her so that she could determine a schedule.

EPA/NIST/EMMC ITEMS

Ms. Burmeister told the committee that she had requested an update from NIST on the status of accreditation and costs involved. Mr. Doug Faison responded through email and provided this information:

“We have announced to the applicant providers that a panel review will be conducted on October 19, 1999 and that any provider meeting all requirements at that time would be granted accreditation as part of the first class of providers. We will update our web site by COB on October 25, 1999.”

As for costs, accreditation in all parameters offered at this time would run between \$14,000.00 and \$16,000.00.

This does not include [Radiochemistry] and does not include any costs for proficiency testing. [Analytical Chemistry Division] is eating the PT costs the first year.”

OTHER ITEMS OR ISSUES

The next conference call for the PT Committee will be on September 7, 1999, from 1 to 3 p.m. EST.

**ACTION ITEMS
PROFICIENCY TESTING COMMITTEE MEETING
AUGUST 24, 1999**

Item No.	Action	Date to be Completed
1.	Ms. Burmeister will distribute to the committee the definition for "assigned value," which was written by Mr. Matt Caruso.	
2.	Ms. Burmeister will contact possible candidates for committee membership and ask them to fill out nomination forms.	
3.	Mr. Matt Caruso will draft a response to Illinois ELAP and California ELAP.	
4.	Ms. Anne Rhyne will revise the interpretive guidance document and send it to committee members for review.	
5.	Ms. Anne Rhyne will ask about a deadline for comments at the next meeting of the NELAC Board of Directors.	
6.	Committee members will send their October schedules to Ms. Burmeister so that she can plan a date for a face-to-face committee meeting.	
7.	Mr. Larry Jackson will continue to try to determine whether the committee can gain access to EPA's Contract Laboratory Program (CLP) database.	
8.	The Solid Waste Subcommittee will develop timelines for the development of regression equations for analytes outside the scope of WP and for solid waste analytes (from 8/3/99 teleconference).	

**PARTICIPANTS
PROFICIENCY TESTING COMMITTEE MEETING
AUGUST 24, 1999**

Name		Affiliation	Address
Burmeister, Barbara	Chair	Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene	T: (608) 833 - 1770 F: (608) 833 - 2803 E: burmie@mail.slh.wisc.edu
Autry, Lara (absent)		USEPA/OAQPS	T: (919) 541 - 5544 F: (919) 541 - 1039 E: autry.lara@epamail.epa.gov
Caruso, Matthew (absent)		NY State Dept. of Health	T: (518) 485 - 5570 F: (518) 485 - 5568 E: caruso@wadsworth.org
Friedman, David (invited guest)		USEPA	T: (202) 564-6662 F: (202) 565-2432 E: friedman.david@epa.gov
Haynes, RaeAnn		Oregon Dept. of Environmental Quality	T: (503) 229-5983 F: (503) 229-6924 E: haynes.raeann@deq.state.or.us
Jackson, Larry		Environmental Quality Management, NH	T: (603) 924-6852 F: (603) 924-6346 E: lpjackson@msn.com
Kropilak, Michele		NJ Dept. of Environmental Protection	T: (609) 984 - 7732 F: (609) 777 - 1774 E: Mkropilak@dep.state.nj.us
Nettrour, Cindy		American Water Works Services Co., Inc.	T: (618) 239 - 0516 F: (618) 235 - 6349 E: cnettrou@bellevillelab.com
Parker, Faust (absent)		Espy, Houston & Assoc, Biomon. Lab	T: (713) 977 - 1500 F: (713) 977 - 9233 E: fausteha@wt.net
Rhyne, Anne	Board Liaison	TX Nat. Res. Conserv. Comm.	T: (512) 239 - 1291 F: (512) 239 - 2550 E: arhyne@tnrcc.state.tx.us
Wibby, Chuck		Environmental Resources Association	T: (303) 431 - 8454 F: (303) 421 - 0159 E: qcstds@aol.com
Lloyd, Jenny (Contractor Support)		Research Triangle Institute	T: (919) 541-5942 F: (919) 541-5929 E: jml@rti.org